

Evaluation

Evaluation for the SPIRIT program is being conducted by the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH) and is a key component of the program. Evaluation is crucial in determining program effectiveness. Student responses help identify how they are being helped by SPIRIT, what they like and dislike about the program, and how to make the program better. It is also important to receive input from providers, teachers and other school personnel to increase the program's success.



SPIRIT Partners

Missouri Department of Mental Health
Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

1-800-575-7480

www.MissouriPrevention.org



Missouri Institute of Mental Health

Community Partnership of the Ozarks
and Carthage Schools

Family Counseling Center and
New Madrid Schools

National Council on Alcoholism and
Drug Abuse and Ritenour Schools

Preferred Family Healthcare and Knox Schools

Swope Parkway Health Center and
Hickman Mills Schools



MISSOURI SPIRIT

School-based
Prevention Intervention
and Resources Initiative



Missouri **SPIRIT**

In 2002, the Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ADA) began an ambitious project to bring prevention professionals and evidence-based violence and substance abuse programs to schools in five selected Missouri school districts throughout the state. The goals of the project, called SPIRIT (School-based Prevention Intervention and Resources Initiative), are to improve overall school performance, reduce incidents of violence, and to delay the onset of substance use and decrease substance use.

Principals, prevention professionals, and teachers have been enthusiastic about the SPIRIT program and have felt that it has made a positive impact on the school environment and students.



SPIRIT Impact

Within a three-year sample, SPIRIT youth:

- improved their decision-making skills.
- became more aware of the dangers of drugs.
- had a significant drop in bullying and shoving/hitting.



Goals of **SPIRIT**

- To increase every school-age child's readiness to learn as a result of providing a safe environment that is free from the harmful effects of alcohol and substance abuse and violence;
- To delay age of first use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs;
- To promote safety in Missouri's classrooms by reducing the incidence of substance abuse and related acts of violence;
- To strengthen and support families to minimize the risks for youth violence and substance abuse;
- To provide early intervention for children at greatest risk for substance abuse;
- To refer children with substance abuse problems to appropriate treatment services to prevent further adverse consequences; and
- To ensure that strategies for school-based services are cost-effective, with measurable goals and outcomes.

Schools Support **SPIRIT**

Principals stated that **SPIRIT**:

"...is a strong program. There are positive changes that I've noticed. The students are having more positive reactions toward others."

"...it made a difference in school climate because relationships are built out of it. The curriculum is important, but more than that, it's the relationships they make with peers and adults."

Teachers report that SPIRIT staff have proved instrumental in assisting them in addressing difficult issues. The value of SPIRIT grew as teachers personally witnessed their students benefiting from the program.

Students Like **SPIRIT**



- Youth felt that the program helped them control anger, get along better with others, and learn how to behave in tough situations.
- Most of the youth felt that time in the program was valuable.
- Most youth felt that the program made their school a better place to learn.